



P.O. Box 60566, Florence, MA 01062

Dedicated to the preservation of open space and the promotion of affordable housing

Volume 17, No. 1

Spring 2005

From the President's Desk: A Valuable Legacy

Happy Spring to All! As I write this in late March, Red-winged Blackbirds are proclaiming their territories teed up on the cattails at Fitzgerald Lake. Common Grackles, Woodcocks, Eastern Phoebes, and various ducks are working their way into the conservation area, looking for the few open spots in the snow and ice. Another long hard New England winter is over, and those bright warm spring days are finally here. However, it is also a sad time for me, as I will not be able to share another glorious spring with my dear friend, Bill Schafer. This past December Bill passed away after a valiant 7-year battle with colon cancer. Bill was an ardent supporter and advocate of Broad Brook Coalition, and was also a frequent volunteer, on the trails doing rock or bog bridge work, pulling up invasive species, or helping to clear and seed Cooke's Pasture. Bill also did a lot of work on the Bridge over the Brook (BOB) and served on the BBC Board for 3 years.

This past fall Bill received BBC's annual award for outstanding volunteer service, an award richly deserved. Unfortunately Bill was too ill to attend the meeting by that time, so his son David, in an emotional speech, accepted the award for him. Along with the award we blew up a picture of Bill after working in the marsh cutting invasive *Phragmites* plants, soaked up to his chest (*see enclosure*). In his last few weeks at home, this picture and the award were always at his bedside, and Bill was very proud of both. Bill volunteered so often because he really loved the conservation area, the outdoors, wildlife, woodlands, and especially birds. It is Bill's enthusiasm and almost childlike wonder of nature that I will miss the most.



Bill was a tireless advocate for BBC because he knew the value of grassroots organizations such as ours, small organizations that quietly do a lot of the dirty, unheralded work that is so important in keeping natural areas natural and ever trying to expand them. He never was one to simply give lip service to conservation. Bill brought his body and soul to every project, even when he was really too sick to be doing this sort of work. Bill also dragged a lot of people to the conservation area, and he recruited many new members for us. Additionally, if it were not for Bill Schafer, I would not be the president of this wonderful organization, because Bill was the one who recommended me to the Board years ago. It was also through Bill that I met so many of you, one of the greatest gifts that Bill has given me, and one that has truly changed my life. The membership of BBC is truly diverse, but all of you are dedicated and involved, and I am proud to call many of you my friends.

Now for the good part. Bill appreciated the conservation area and BBC so much that when he died, he left BBC a challenge grant of **\$10,000!** We have one short year to try and match this bequest, the deadline being **February 16, 2006**. Bill has asked that all of the funds go to BBC's Land Acquisition Fund. This bequest actually comes at an opportune time for us, as we have almost depleted our land preservation/acquisition funds with the acquisition of the Morin and Michalski/Stewart parcels, and we are still working on some other tantalizing land deals that should come to fruition in the near future. We are slowly but surely filling in

those missing pieces to the north and east. Bill has also asked that all of the matching donations come from the community at large, which is why we are asking you, as friends of Bill, as lovers of the conservation area, as supporters of your local conservation organization, to pitch in and help us fulfill one of Bill's final wishes. Please use the form and return envelope enclosed in this newsletter for donations to this effort. Bill would be very proud of all of us if we could raise this money in record time. Remember that we are entirely nonprofit, and no one receives a salary, our only major expense being this newsletter. I know how generous you all have been in the past, so I will thank you all in advance, and I'm sure Bill thanks you as well. And of course, we all give a final thank you to William Torbert Schafer.

Bob Packard

"Co-Existing with Coyotes" Rescheduled

There were many disappointed members and guests at BBC's Annual Meeting in November when our speaker on "Living with Coyotes" was ill and had to cancel. Murphy's Law seemed to be operating that day—or maybe Coyote, the Trickster of legend, had a hand in making sure that whatever could go wrong, did! But we had lots of help to save the day: the Florence Civic and Business Association, especially Bill Arnold, who made a special trip to open up the Florence Civic Center; Peter Searl and John Body, who stepped in to entertain us with their videos on Fitzgerald Lake and Northampton wildlife; and Miss Florence Diner, which donated coffee. Thanks to all!

We'll join with other conservation groups to bring you the "Co-Existing with Coyotes" program on **Wednesday, May 4, at 7:00 PM**, in the Little Theater at Northampton High School. The presenter is Trina Moruzzi, Wildlife Biologist, MassWildlife. She will discuss the biology, natural history, and habits of coyotes in Massachusetts and the do's and don'ts of co-existing with them in this area. There will be plenty of time for individual questions.

In addition to BBC, the sponsors of the program are the Northampton Wildlife Committee, a subcommittee of the Northampton Conservation Commission; Leeds Civic Association; Friends of Sawmill Hills; and Northampton City Councilors Michael Bardsley and Marianne LaBarge. The same group cosponsored a program on "Co-Existing with Black Bears" on March 30; see page 8 for an account of that program.

Norma Roche

Join the BBC List Serv!

BBC members and friends can receive notices about Walks and Talks, work days, special events, and conservation issues via the BBC list serv. This method of communication can vastly improve our ability to communicate and save postage, paper, and volunteer time. If you'd like to subscribe, send an empty e-mail to [<broad_brook_coalition-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>](mailto:broad_brook_coalition-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Julia Chevan (our technical advisor) at [<jchevan@comcast.net>](mailto:jchevan@comcast.net) or Bruce Hart (our program administrator) at [<bhart2000@aol.com>](mailto:bhart2000@aol.com).

Kim Lutz to Address 2005 Annual Meeting

We are very pleased to announce that Kim Lutz, Director of The Nature Conservancy's Connecticut River Program, has agreed to be our featured speaker at the BBC's Annual Meeting on **Sunday, November 6**. Her talk will be entitled "The Connecticut River, A Journey Toward Restoration." Kim, a conservation biologist, has recently settled in Northampton with her family. As director of the Connecticut River Program, her mission is to implement plans for cleaning, restoring, and enhancing the biodiversity of the Connecticut River watershed from its source in New Hampshire to its discharge in the Long Island Sound. **Save the date!**

Bob Zimmermann



Vernal Pools: Critical Habitat for New England Creatures

As spring arrives in New England, bringing with it rain and warmer temperatures that melt the winter's snow cover, vernal pools come alive. Vernal pools may just look like large puddles scattered across the New England landscape, but a closer look reveals a special community of organisms that depend on these ephemeral habitats. Vernal pools typically dry up annually or periodically, so reproductive fish populations cannot exist in these wetland habitats. Many of our local amphibians need fishless pools for successful reproduction. Vernal pools also provide habitat for many aquatic and semi-aquatic invertebrates, including crustaceans known as fairy shrimp that are only found in vernal pools. Since vernal pools are so critical to these animals, the identification and protection of these pools is important. Knowing about the organisms that are found in vernal pools is the first step for anyone interested in exploring and protecting these important habitats.

Marbled salamander



A group of salamanders known as mole salamanders use vernal pools as mating sites. The four mole salamander species found in New England are the spotted salamander, the marbled salamander, the Jefferson salamander, and the blue-spotted salamander. A hybridized Jefferson and blue-spotted salamander complex also occurs in areas of New England. Mole salamanders spend most of their lives, which can exceed 20 years for some individuals, under the earth's surface in upland forests. During warm rainy nights in early spring, adult spotted, Jefferson, and blue-spotted salamanders migrate to vernal pools to engage in their mating rituals. Once mating has taken place and fertilized females have laid their eggs in the pools, these salamanders return to their secretive lives in the surrounding woodlands. Eggs hatch in 1–2 months, and aquatic larvae develop in the pool for an additional 2–4 months before emerging as land-dwelling salamanders. Marbled salamanders lead similar

lives, but for this species, mating takes place in late summer or early fall in the depressions of dry vernal pools. Female marbled salamanders deposit their eggs under leaf litter in dry pools. The eggs hatch when the pools refill with water. If the pools fill with water in the fall or winter, marbled salamander larvae can survive through the winter, where they feed on aquatic invertebrates under the ice and emerge the following spring.

Many of the frogs and toads native to New England use vernal pools and other wetlands for mating and foraging, but two of these species depend on vernal pools for successful reproduction: the wood frog and the spadefoot toad. Wood frogs live in forested uplands and migrate to vernal pools during warm rainy nights in early spring to mate. Male wood frogs have a unique mating call that attracts their female counterparts to the vernal pools from which they sing. When mating is complete and eggs have been deposited, adult wood frogs return to the uplands. Wood frog eggs hatch in 3–4 weeks, and larvae develop in the pools for another month or two before emerging as frogs and living in the surrounding forests. The rare eastern spadefoot toad lives in underground burrows in shrub or open forest areas and uses vernal pools for breeding. Adult eastern spadefoot toads migrate to vernal pools during heavy rains in spring and summer, where males use their unique calls to attract females for mating. Eastern spadefoot toad eggs typically hatch within a week, and larvae develop in the pools for 2 weeks to a month before emergence onto land as toads.



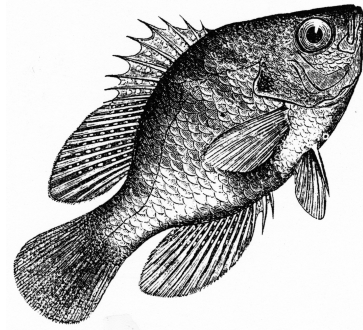
Fairy shrimp

Invertebrates play a critical ecological role in vernal pools. Herbivorous invertebrates break organic material into smaller pieces that provide consumable material for smaller organisms to feed on. Invertebrates are also the main food source for developing mole salamander larvae. Fairy shrimp are found only in vernal pools because their eggs require a drying period before they will hatch when the pools refill with water. Look for adult fairy shrimp in vernal pools in early spring. Many other aquatic or

semi-aquatic invertebrates are found in New England vernal pools, including dragonfly and damselfly larvae, mayfly larvae, caddisfly larvae, giant water bugs, predaceous diving beetles, snails, and fingernail clams.

Since so many wildlife species use vernal pools for certain phases of their lives, the protection and conservation of these habitats is very important. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has specific guidelines and requirements for the certification of vernal pools in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts NHESP maintains a statewide database on all certified pools and has identified sites where potential vernal pools may exist. Certified pools in Massachusetts are given some degree of protection (up to 100 feet around the pools), but since the amphibians that use vernal pools for breeding require upland forests adjacent to the pools, protecting these forests is equally important. Studies suggest that some of these amphibians may use habitat a half mile or more from their breeding pools, indicating that the 100-foot protection area around certified pools is not enough. Habitat fragmentation caused by human development further increases the problems surrounding vernal pool conservation in New England. The more people become aware of and appreciate these magnificent habitats, the easier it will be to convince decision makers that these are special places that need protection.

Brandon Abbott



A Fisherman's Legacy to Fitzgerald Lake

Broad Brook Coalition would like to thank the family and friends of Arthur "Art" Pope, of Florence, for donating over \$500 to Broad Brook Coalition in his memory. Mr. Pope, who was 85, passed away on January 10, 2005.

Born and raised in Northampton, he was a longtime resident of Florence. He was an Army veteran of World War II in the South Pacific where he earned the Bronze Star. He was a longtime employee of Construction Service Ready Mix in Wilbraham and was a member of Teamsters Local 404. He worked as recently as December before he became ill.

An avid fisherman and ice fisherman, he "knew every stream in western Massachusetts," according to his daughter, Marianne Waszkelewicz of Ludlow. He could frequently be found fishing the Deerfield River in Charlemont. At his request, his ashes will be scattered at his favorite fishing spot.

Andrew Grimaldi

We want to hear from you!

The names and contact information for the Board of Directors are provided to encourage members to communicate with the Board. If you have questions or concerns about BBC and its activities, please don't hesitate to get in touch with any of us. If you e-mail us, please put "BBC" in your subject heading and make your subject clear, so that if we don't recognize your name or address, we'll know your message isn't "Spam."



Salamander larva

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Northampton Residents Mount Effort to Adopt Community Preservation Act

A group of Northampton residents is working to pass the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA) in the city. Through either a City Council vote or citizen petition drive, the first step will be to put the question—"Shall Northampton adopt the Community Preservation Act?"—on the November 2005 ballot. An educational and advocacy campaign will accompany the effort.

What is the Community Preservation Act? Enacted in 2000, the Act funds three specific community priorities often omitted from City budgets: open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation. In addition, it puts decisions about those priorities into citizen hands.

How does the CPA work? CPA funds can be used *only* for open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation. CPA funds are *additional* to the City budget, but do not go into the general fund.

Funds come from a voter-approved surtax on local property taxes
The surtax is matched by the State
A Citizen CPA Committee decides which community projects to fund
City Council approves the funding

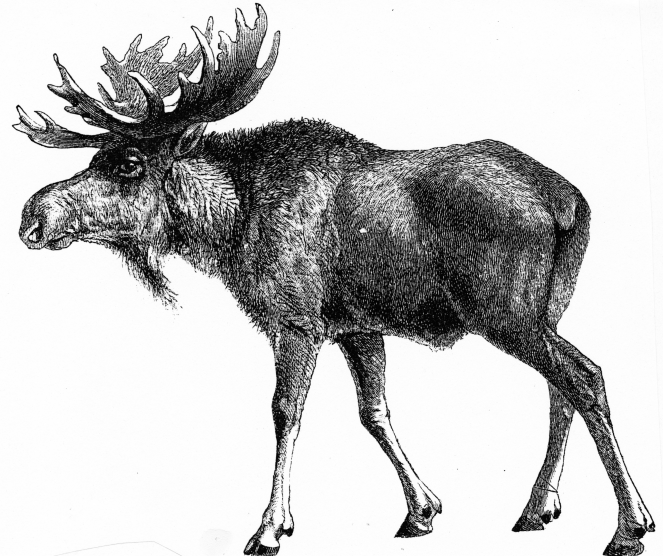
What can the CPA do for the community? The CPA is designed to fund community projects of limited scale—for example, acquiring prime scenic parcels, helping to build scattered-site housing, or renovating a historic town building. The Act is *not* designed to buy all the open space in the City, or construct large tracts of housing—such things would require many millions of dollars. Nor does the CPA drive up the price of land or housing—speculation does that.

Next Steps: In the coming weeks, proponents will decide how best to propose the Act for Northampton. Should we conduct a citizen petition drive? What surtax percentage should we call for? (The maximum is 3%.) Which exemptions should be included? (Exemptions are allowed for low-income elderly homeowners and for the first \$100,000 of a home's value.)

Models exist in the many area communities that have already adopted the CPA—Agawam (1%), Amherst (1%), Conway (1.5%), Easthampton (3%), Hadley (3%), Hampden (1%), Leverett (3%), Southampton (3%), Southwick (3%), Sturbridge (3%), Westfield (1%), and Wilbraham (1.5%).

Interested? For more information, go to www.communitypreservation.org. To join the effort, contact Lilly Lombard (jollypair@comcast.net, 413-303-9140), Joanne Montgomery (jomont@comcast.net, 586-6083), or John Body (jbody@mtholyoke.edu, 584-4931).

Joanne Montgomery



Hello, my name is Stanley Bruce
And I'd really like to see a moose
Between the maples, oaks, and spruce
There's gotta be just one big moose
Ain't no good reason or excuse
Why I can't find a single moose
When leaves are falling or hanging loose
You'd think it easy to spot a moose
Thru shades of magenta and chartreuse
My eyes should gaze upon a moose
But this searching war has no truce
For me to capture a surrendering moose
Might be some trick or real weird ruse
To keep me distant from my moose
My chances should rise, not reduce
To catch quick glimpses of a moose
I saw a beaver, bear, and goose
So why not see one stately moose
Am I too dumb or real obtuse
To never glance upon a moose
I just can't stand any more abuse
Please let me spy one friggin' moose!

Stan Pollack

BBC Management Committee Develops Management Plan for FLCA

The 2005–2009 Management Plan for the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area has been completed by the Broad Brook Coalition Management Committee (Brian Adams, Andrew Grimaldi, Bob Packard, Lou Peugh, and Bob Zimmermann) and approved by the BBC Board of Directors. The purpose of the plan is to provide specific goals and objectives to guide the management of the conservation area. These goals and objectives, not necessarily in order of priority, include the following:

I. Maintain and Enhance the Diversity and Integrity of Habitats and Species in the FLCA

- A. Control invasive species and replant cleared areas with native species
- B. Maintain and enhance the diversity and integrity of shrublands found at Cooke's Pasture and South Pasture
- C. Maintain and enhance the diversity and integrity of forested uplands
- D. Manage recreational use and minimize damage to sensitive sites
- E. Protect the water quality in Fitzgerald Lake, Broad Brook, and adjacent wetlands and promote aquatic biodiversity
- F. Promote ecological research
- G. Protect and expand FLCA

II. Encourage Education and Outreach

- A. Provide interpretive materials
- B. Maintain nature trails
- C. Promote "Walks and Talks"
- D. Continue collaboration with organized groups
- E. Maintain wildlife blind
- F. Publish newsletter

III. Provide Access for Recreational Uses that Are Compatible with the Above Goals

- A. Promote allowed activities on less-sensitive sites
- B. Promote handicapped access where possible
- C. Discourage types of uses that are destructive
- D. Provide for better enforcement of conservation area rules
- E. Promote and maintain hiking trails

IV. Ensure a Steady Stream of Funding to Meet the Above Goals and Objectives

The plan has been submitted to the Northampton Planning Office and the Conservation Commission. Copies of the 28-page Management Plan are available free of charge to anyone interested. For more information, or to receive a copy, contact Brian Adams at (home) 586-3063, (work) 775-1454, or by email at adams@gcc.mass.edu. *Brian Adams*

When a Rose Is Not Just a Rose: Help Needed to Remove Invasive Species

While it may be beautiful with its many clusters of fragrant white or even pink flowers, Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*) is an invasive plant species that BBC's Management Committee has been working diligently to get rid of in the FLCA. Multiflora rose was originally introduced from Asia and promoted as a "living fence" to control livestock, stabilize soil, and create barriers for highways. Unfortunately, this serious invader and aggressive shrub now creates a "living hell" of thorny thickets, as the plant's stems are generously studded with stiff thorns.

The tiny red fruits (hips) of this perennial shrub are fed on by birds and may be spread to other areas, where it can reproduce by seed as well as by rooting at the tips of the drooping canes. Thriving in any habitat from pasture to forest, it can displace many native trees, shrubs, and herbs, effectively thwarting their regeneration and preventing their establishment. Along with other invasive species it represents a major threat to native biodiversity. In the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area it is found in numerous "disturbed" areas, including the wheelchair-accessible trail at the North Farms Road entrance, by the lake, and in South Pasture.

BBC volunteers are entering our fourth year of hand removal of this noxious invasive, and have met with good success. The plant has been almost completely eradicated along the wheelchair-accessible trail, and we have begun additional work along the lake. We'll continue with the hand removal of multiflora rose on **Sunday, May 1, at 9:00 AM** at the North Farms Road entrance. Bring shovels, clippers, gloves, kids, donuts, and a sense of humor and join us for a few hours of tiring and bloody but ultimately rewarding work.

We are also planning, perhaps on the same day, to remove the clump of Oriental Bittersweet, another invasive, in the center of Cooke's Pasture. Once it is removed we will be planting an "island" of native fruit-bearing shrubs in the same location to attract birds and other wildlife. We'll need lots of help with these activities so please mark your calendar!!!

Brian Adams



As an expression of our commitment to our environment, this newsletter is printed on 100% recycled paper.

BBC to Organize Management of Cloverdale Extension CR

The City has asked BBC, and we have agreed, to take over the management of the Cloverdale Extension Conservation Restriction for a period of two years. This CR is a tiny wooded lot in the close-knit neighborhood just east of Bridge Road and North Farms Road, a little north of Fitzgerald Fences. Although this is not a significant parcel of land, either ecologically or in acreage, the neighborhood gets a lot of use out of it, and they also have asked us if we would agree to do this.

We have taken on this obligation on a trial basis, to see if we can get a neighborhood group to do the minimal trail work and maintenance involved, and to see whether or not it entails any problems we had not anticipated. We would like to ask that anyone in the neighborhood who would like to volunteer to help with trail maintenance, trash removal, invasive species removal, etc. in this CR to contact our trails chair, Bob Bissell, or myself (see the list of Board members for our contact information).

Bob Packard

Trail Work Day Saturday, June 11, 9:00 AM–Noon North Farms Road entrance

Everyone is welcome! Meet at the North Farms Road entrance at 9 AM. We'll supply tools—or you can bring your own (shovels, hoes, clippers, rakes, picks, and work gloves). And bring energy and enthusiasm. Our work days are low key, fun, and provide an opportunity to meet others with similar outdoor interests. For more information, please get in touch with Bob Bissell <robertbissell@yahoo.com>.

The FLCA trails are generally in good shape, and our work will help keep them that way. If you notice anything amiss out on the trails—such as newly fallen trees—that needs to be dealt with before the work day, please let Bob know.

Bob Bissell, Trails Chair

A new kestrel house has been placed at the entrance to Cooke's Pasture in the hope of attracting a family of these small hawks (about the size of a bluejay). If anyone notices starlings in the box, we'd like to find out so that they can be evicted—please get in touch with any Management Committee or Board member.

BBC CALENDAR: Spring 2005

Walks and Talks: Accessible Birding

Shirley Hilborn and Anne Lombard
Saturday, April 9, 9:00–11:00 AM
(Advance registration required)

Vernal Pool Walk and Talk

Brandon Abbott
Saturday, April 23, 1:00–3:00 PM

Invasive Species Work Day

Sunday, May 1, 9:00 AM

Walks and Talks: Accessible Birding

Shirley Hilborn and Anne Lombard
Wednesday, May 4, 8:00–10:00 AM
(Advance registration required)

Co-Existing with Coyotes

Wednesday, May 4, 7:00 PM

Beginners' Bird Walk and Talk

Lisa Rock and Pete Westover
Saturday, May 21, 7 AM (2–3 hours)

Walks and Talks: Aquatic Insects

Chris Gentes
Saturday, June 4, 10:00 AM

Trail Work Day

Saturday, June 11, 9:00 AM–Noon

Walks and Talks: Dragonflies and Damselflies:

Jewels of our Wetlands

Bob Packard
Saturday, July 2, 1:00 PM

Walks and Talks:

This and That and Beaver Habitat

Gini Traub
Friday, July 22, 7:00–8:30 PM

BBC Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 6

Save the date!

Co-Existing With Humans

My name is Greta and I live with my two fat cubs in and around the heavily settled neighborhoods of Northampton.

My family and I just wanted to drop this quick thank you note to the community of Northampton for its generous provisions of food and supplies, which seem to increase each and every year.

Last Wednesday night I had the pleasure of attending a fascinating talk on "Co-Existing with Humans," given by David Fuller, a biologist from MassWildlife. In all honesty, the name of the talk, for some reason, was "Co-Existing with Black Bears." I was the only bear that showed up. As time passes, I believe we will have greater and greater representation at these meetings which will reflect our steadily increasing population. Let me explain.

During pre-settlement times (from the 1600s and before), the state of Massachusetts consisted mostly of mixed hardwood forests. Our people numbered around 4,000. By the height of European settlement and farming, only 10 of us were left in the entire state. Now, thanks to hunting laws and abundant food sources, we have bounded back to our former numbers.

Now, I don't mean that there are more berries, nuts, or skunk cabbages kicking around. We've found a newer, easier food source than that, thanks to a pastime of you humans that has grown in recent years: feeding the bears. Oops, I mean the birds.

I had a feeling that more Massachusetts residents are into feeding birds now than when I was a cub. And, according to David Fuller, I'm right! There are more bird feeders in Massachusetts per square mile than in any other state in the country. Thank you, again, for such a rich and easy food source. I like birds.



I do have one major complaint, though, and that's your complaining about us. Hey, what are we supposed to do? You put out the bird feeders. You create the compost heaps with all those wonderful mounds of overly ripened fruit, orange peels, leftover rice and pasta, and moldy bread. It's really good stuff and my cubs and I have absolutely no self control. We go for the booty. Immediately you're on the phone to the police or the Wildlife Control offices complaining that we're a nuisance. I've been tranquilized three times already. It frightens my cubs to death. We may even have to start family counseling.

The kicker is that now, the Wildlife Control officers tell me that if I mess up one more time I'm gone. For good. What do they mean?

Some lady named Deb Jacobs suggested at the meeting that the state should provide bear proof dumpsters. What a bad idea! Then we couldn't grab those extra special treats.

David Fuller also strongly advised the public to limit its use of bird feeders and/or place them in a strategic place away from the house. He also said (and this got me really mad) that you should keep grills clean and free of grease and reconsider the compost pile if you have a bear "problem."

Lastly, he advised that humans should never feed bears. He said that bears coming in regular contact with humans makes us less afraid and puts us in greater danger, as well as you all.

In conclusion, I'd like to state that all the above is terrible advice. Keep your bird feeders up. All of them. Keep the grease cooking, and those compost heaps piled. And if you stop feeding us, then we're leaving! So there! *Transcribed by Joan Robb*

Help Wanted

Newsletter Apprentice. Work with the Newsletter editor, organize mailings and make trips to the post office, and eventually take over as Newsletter editor.

Writers and reporters are needed too! Have an idea for a story? Want an assignment? Let us know! Or exercise your creativity—tell us about your experiences in the conservation area, or send us your stories, poems, or observations. Give it a try, as several members have done in this issue.

If you're interested, please get in touch with Norma Roche (586-4364, nroche@crocker.com).

Pending Purchase to Add 33.5 Acres to FLCA

The City of Northampton is about to add another 33.5 acres to the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area, with the help of a \$15,000 contribution from BBC's Land Acquisition Fund.

This acquisition has been a long time in the making. Wayne Feiden of the City Planning Office negotiated a purchase-and-sale agreement with Helen Stewart, who inherited four parcels of land near the conservation area from her brother, Charles Michalski. They agreed that if the City would "grandfather" 3 acres at the front of a 10-acre parcel on Coles Meadow Road as a building lot, Ms. Stewart would give the back 7 acres to the City, and she would also sell three other landlocked parcels to the City at a bargain price.

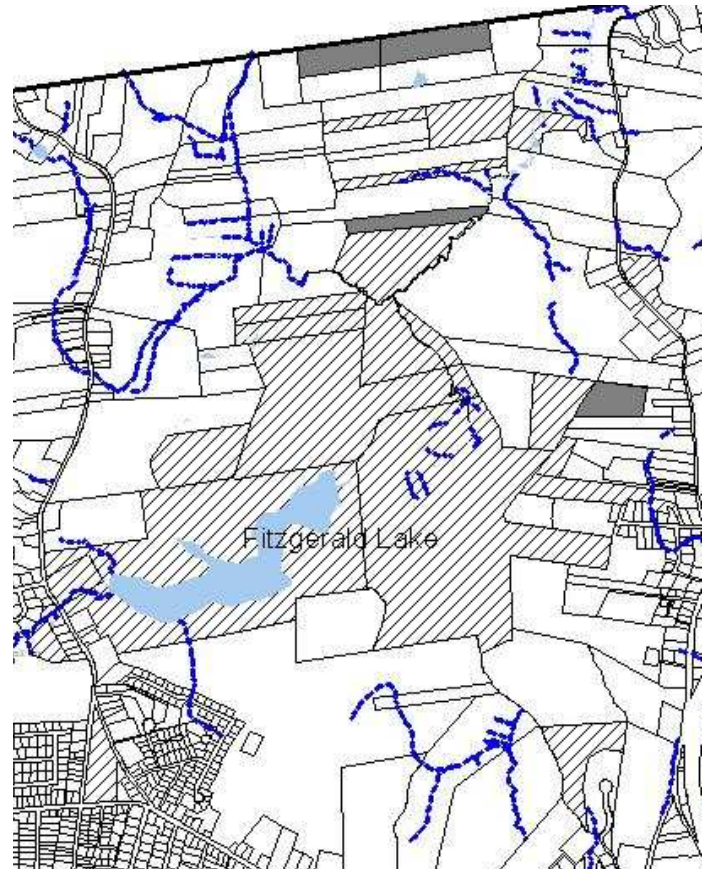
The building lot required a special permit under the City's Open Space Residential Development zoning provision, as it would otherwise not have had the required frontage. The Conservation Commission and the Planning Board had to sign off on the plan, which they did on January 13. The BBC Board supported this plan in the hope of avoiding denser development of the parcel, which could involve a stream crossing and an unknown number of houses on the back 7 acres, which have extensive wetlands. The Board believed that this plan offers the best opportunity to preserve the rural character of Coles Meadow Road while protecting a significant amount of land for conservation and recreation. One of the landlocked parcels included in the deal borders the current conservation area, and another contains a probable vernal pool.

The Northampton City Council approved the purchase on February 3. The building lot is now being surveyed, and when that work is completed, the closing will take place.

BBC has pledged to contribute \$15,000 of the \$17,000 purchase price. The City is contributing the other \$2000 as well as the "soft costs" involved in the purchase (appraisal, survey, and legal expenses). The BBC funds were raised over the last two years mainly by a low-key campaign asking members to contribute to the Land Acquisition Fund when renewing their membership. These contributions made possible both this purchase and that of the Morin parcel in Fall 2004.

The Land Preservation/Acquisition Committee (Frank Olbris, Norma Roche, Peter Searl, and Rachel Smith) is grateful to Ms. Stewart for getting in touch with us and working with the City to put this agreement together, to Wayne Feiden for his hard work on the negotiations and for steering the plan through the

approval process, to the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, and the City Council for their support, and especially to all of you whose gifts to the Land Acquisitions Fund—even when no particular purchase was pending—made it possible to respond to this opportunity when it came to us. *Norma Roche*



Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. The Michalski/Stewart parcels are shown in gray. The cross-hatched area is the existing conservation area. Coles Meadow Road is at the right, and North Farms Road at the left.

Grants Offered for Habitat Maintenance on Private Land

Are you interested in maintaining wildlife habitat, protecting threatened species, or removing invasive species on your own property? The MassWildlife Landowner Incentive Program provides private landowners interested in developing, restoring, or maintaining wildlife habitat with financial and technical assistance, offering grants to cover 75% of the landowner's costs. The deadline to apply for funding has been extended to April 15. For more information, visit the MassWildlife Web site at http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfw_lip.htm.

Walks and Talks Spring–Summer 2005

Broad Brook Coalition is eager to involve members and friends in educational, experiential, and fun activities that highlight the resources of Fitzgerald Lake and the surrounding woodlands, pastures, and wetlands. Bring friends and family, dress appropriately for the weather, bring a snack and drink, and enjoy. Suggestions regarding topics, new leaders and past programs are always welcome. Call Bruce Hart, evenings, at 584-4176 <bhart2000@aol.com>.

Note that two of our Spring programs require pre-registration. Additions to this schedule will be listed on the BBC List serv, so sign up now (see page 2).

Accessible Birding

Shirley Hilborn and Anne Lombard

Saturday, April 9, 9:00–11:00 AM

Wednesday, May 4, 8:00–10:00 AM

(Advance registration required)

Join Shirley Hilborn and Anne Lombard as they leisurely look and listen for early migrants along the wheelchair-accessible walkway that leads out to the lake. See what species will turn up in the varied habitat between the parking area and the water. These walks are for anyone interested in birds—for people both with and without disabilities. These gently paced bird-watching opportunities are open to people of all ages and abilities. Advance registration is required; please call All Out Adventures at 413-527-8980. Some optical equipment and birding gear is available.

Vernal Pool Walk and Talk

Brandon Abbott

Saturday, April 23, 1:00–3:00 PM

North Farms Road entrance

Join conservation biologist/educator Brandon Abbott for an exploration of some of the vernal pools within the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. These temporary wetlands provide critical habitat for animals such as spotted salamanders, wood frogs, fairy shrimp, and spring peepers, who are probably best known for their sharp peeping calls heard in chorus from wetlands in early spring. Vernal pools are essential habitat for the survival of these species; destroying the pools or blocking access to them will condemn future generations to local extinction. Many other invertebrates, amphibians, and reptiles may be found there as well, though most of the creatures that use the pools tend to do so at night. (A supplement to this visit would be going out with one of the organized groups that heads out on the first rainy night in spring with temperatures above 40 degrees.) The ground will probably be wet, so participants should be prepared.

Beginners' Bird Walk and Talk

Lisa Rock and Pete Westover

Saturday, May 21, 7 AM (2–3 hours)

Moose Lodge entrance (top of Cooke Avenue, off Hatfield Street)

Eastern Mountain Sports will cosponsor this walk to introduce people to the wonders of birding and also to share the morning with more experienced birders. Lisa and Peter will lead participants out to the wildlife blind overlooking the wetland surrounding Broad Brook, and they will also walk out to the dam that has created Fitzgerald Lake. If time allows, they will also explore the restored Cooke's Pasture. To accommodate those who would like to start later, we'll put up signs noting where the group is. All ages are welcome. Bring binoculars, but not cell phones. Lisa and Pete are both Hampshire Bird Club members; Lisa works at Eastern Mountain Sports, and Pete is the former director of the Amherst Conservation Department and current owner of Conservation Works LLC.

Aquatic Insects

Chris Gentes

Saturday, June 4, 10:00 AM

North Farms Road entrance

Join aquatic insect enthusiast Chris Gentes in a search for these fascinating denizens of Fitzgerald Lake. This will be a hands-on experience in which we will identify a variety of insects that spend at least a part of their lives in the water. We'll also attempt to gain some understanding of each insect's role in this ecosystem and how each individual has uniquely evolved to survive in a watery environment. Last year the group found Predacious diving beetles, Backswimmers, Water Boatmen, and Scuds, as well as larvae of Mayflies, Damselflies, and Dragonflies. This is an opportunity to visit with many of the minuscule denizens of the deep that most of us never get to observe.

Dragonflies and Damselflies:

Jewels of our Wetlands

Bob Packard

Saturday, July 2, 1:00 PM

North Farms Road entrance

Their names, in themselves, elicit beauty, mystery, and curiosity: Ruby Meadowhawks, Green Jackets, Violet Dancers, Azure Bluets, Common Baskettails. Bob Packard will lead us as we reacquaint ourselves with these fascinating creatures. Many dragonflies and damselflies are also examples of creatures that require vernal pools to successfully complete their life cycles.

Please Join Us!

If you're not already a member, please complete this form and return it with \$25.00 to
BROAD BROOK COALITION, P.O. Box 60566, Florence, MA 01062
(All contributions to Broad Brook Coalition are **tax deductible**.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

____ Please send me BBC's occasional e-mail "Alerts" regarding BBC programs and local conservation issues.

Broad Brook Coalition Needs Your Help, Too!

We appreciate your membership dues, but we can also use your volunteer time! Members and friends are needed to help carry out our goals. Please consider one (or more!) of the following volunteer opportunities:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trail maintenance and repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Be available for botanical or wildlife consultation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive species removal | <input type="checkbox"/> (my area of expertise is _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mailings | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational/recreational program planning or leadership, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer help | <input type="checkbox"/> Walks and Talks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer at the Cot Shelter | <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor housing issues in the City |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter contributions/publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Serve on BBC Board of Directors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising campaign | <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in planning and management of conservation area |

____ Financial contribution to the Land Acquisition Fund: \$ _____

With warm and sunny weather, there are excellent opportunities to observe these delicate creatures. Binoculars and/or magnifying lenses are helpful. Fun for all ages.

This and That and Beaver Habitat

Gini Traub

Friday, July 22, 7:00–8:30 PM (full moon)

North Farms Road entrance

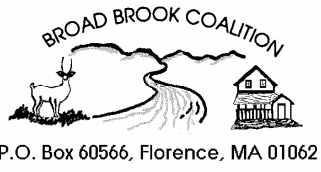
Observe the changing sights and sounds that early evening brings as we walk through the forest to beaver habitat and lodges on Fitzgerald Lake. No guarantees of a beaver sighting, but on our last beaver program with canoes, a beaver sailed ahead of us. Gini will demonstrate some of the activities that support the Massachusetts Forests and Parks "Beaver Ecology" student program. Appropriate for children, their parents, and other adults. Flashlights might be helpful. Heavy rain cancels. For questions call Gini at 413/584-6788. Gini Traub is Regional Education Coordinator for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.



Learning in Retirement will have a special weekday program presented by Jonathan Gottsche, a local environmentalist and wildlife photographer and former interpreter/naturalist for both state and private organizations. Mr. Gottsche will share his knowledge in a firsthand, behind-the-scenes look at the area's natural history. The program will touch upon the effects of forest management, development, and other threats on wildlife and plant populations, as well as the interactions between wildlife and plants.

The program will be in two parts. We'll begin with a short leisurely stroll on the 500-foot paved trail, which is wheelchair accessible, through the surrounding forest to the canoe launch area that extends out into Fitzgerald Lake. All abilities are accommodated for this half of the program, which will take about 1 hour. After this initial walk, those interested in further exploration can continue farther afield, on an easy woodland path, into the less accessible forest. Along the way we will enjoy and discover the flora and fauna that this beautiful setting provides in the height of its most handsome and interesting season.

For further information on Learning in Retirement, call 585-3756, Monday–Thursday, 9:00–1:00.



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**Birding by Wheelchair:
Sign up now for April 9!
See inside . . .**